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HAUNT
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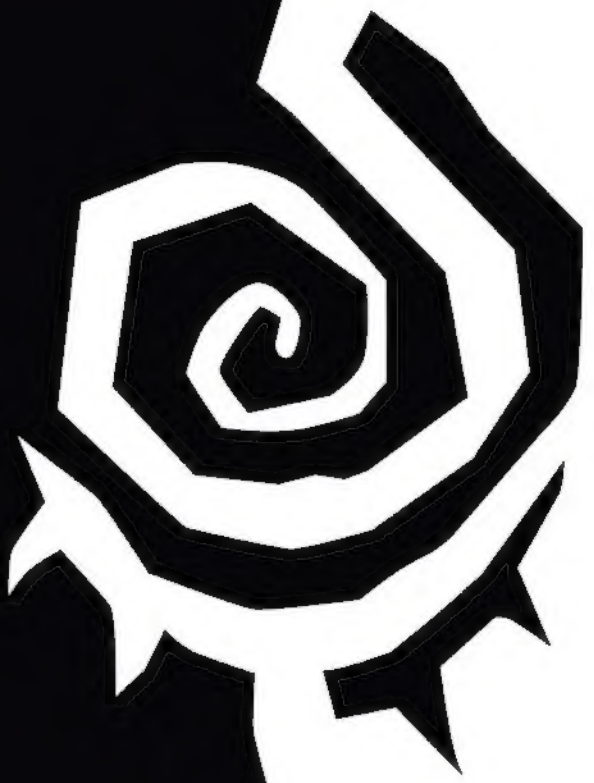

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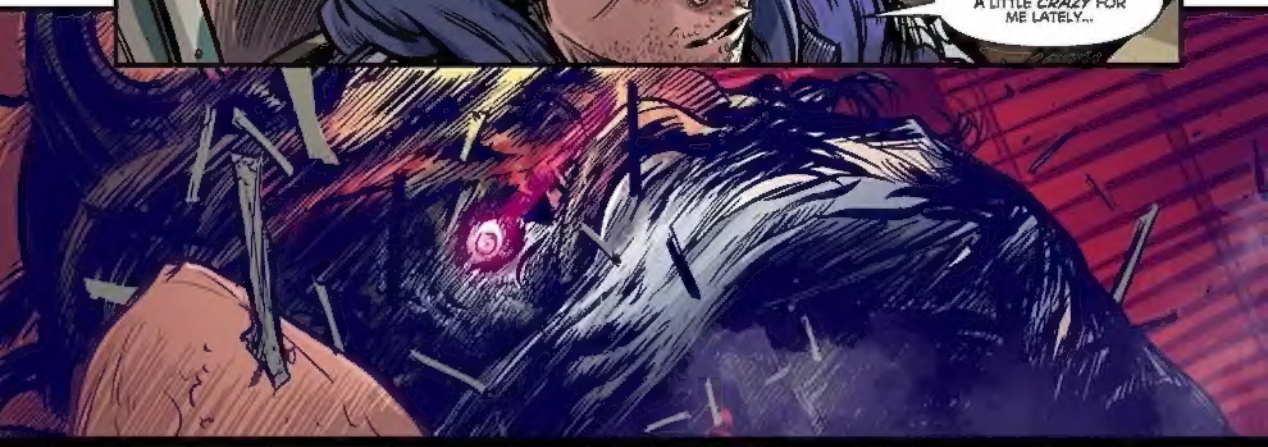
...WE COULDN'T FIND YOU AT YOUR *CHURCH,* AND THEN WE SAW ON THE NEWS THAT IT HAD *BURNED DOWN...!*
THEY WOULDN'T TELL US A DAMN THING...
...EVEN WHEN ALL WE WANTED WAS FOR YOU TO SPEAK AT AUTUMN'S *FUNERAL SERVICE.*
CLOSED CASKET, OF COURSE...

SORRY, MY LAST NAME'S *CARMICHAEL* NOW. HARVEY AND I MARRIED WHEN AUTUMN WAS TWELVE.
FATHER, WE STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW MY BABY GIRL --
THE COPS WOULDN'T EVEN *TELL* US WHAT HAPPENED. BUT WHEN WE HAD TO I.D. THE *BODY...*
...I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING SO...SO...

I-I UNDERSTAND.
AND I'M SINCERELY *SORRY* FOR MY ABSENCE. AS IT HAPPENED, I FOUND MYSELF UNEXPECTEDLY... *ABROAD.*
Y'SEE, THINGS HAVE BEEN... A LITTLE *CRAZY* FOR ME LATELY...



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NO OFFENSE, FATHER... BUT BOO-FRIGGIN-HOO, Y'KNOW WHAT I'M SAYING?!
MY STEP-DAUGHTER IS DEAD AND NO ONE'S DOING A GODDAMN THING ABOUT IT!
SHE WROTE TO ME ONCE...ABOUT YOU...
..."I'VE BEEN TALKING TO A PRIEST LATELY. HIS NAME IS DANIEL KILGORE AND HE'S REALLY HELPED ME SINCE I'VE BEEN HERE IN THE CITY"...
YOU KNOW I NEVER WANTED HER TO LEAVE HOME...
...ANYWAY, SHE GOES ON AND ON ABOUT YOU...
..."HE'S NOT LIKE THE MINISTERS BACK HOME. HE REALLY SEEMS TO CARE. HE TAKES TIME OUT OF HIS DAY TO TALK TO ME WHEN I NEED SOMEONE TO TALK TO..."
SOUNDS LIKE SHE REALLY LIKED YOU, FATHER...
AHEM! YEAH, WELL--
GO AHEAD, ROMEO. TELL 'EM...!
TELL THE FOLKS JUST HOW MUCH THEIR LITTLE GIRL "LIKED" YOU...

...I'M SURE THEY'D LOVE TO HEAR HOW MUCH OF A LADY KILLER THEIR DAUGHTER'S PRIEST TURNED OUT TO BE...!
NO PUN INTENDED, DANNY-BOY.
SHE WAS SUCH A GOOD SOUL, SO GIVING...
SHE WAS ALWAYS WRITING TO US ABOUT EVERYTHING SHE WAS DOING...
...VOLUNTEERING AT THE VILLAGE NURSING HOME...DELIVERING FOR MEALS-ON-WHEELS...SUCH A HARD WORKER...
HA! SOUNDS LIKE SOMEONE DIDN'T TELL HER MOMMY SHE WAS A HARD WORKING PROSTITUTE, EH?!
YES, WELL... YOU'VE GOT A LOT TO BE PROUD OF... WITH HER...
AND TO KNOW SHE WAS SO ACTIVE IN THE CHURCH ON TOP OF EVERYTHING ELSE...
ACTUALLY... SHOULDN'T YOU BE WEARING YOUR COLLAR...?
OH. UHHH...
...SORRY, I-I NEED TO--
--I MEAN, EXCUSE ME...I JUST...WELL, I HAVE TO--
SMOOTH.
I-I'LL BE BACK IN JUST A SECOND...
...MAYBE... YOU WANT TO ORDER SOMETHING? I DUNNO--
WE'RE NOT HERE TO EAT, FATHER...

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RESTROOMS
RIGHT. OF COURSE NOT.
OKAY, SO...
...I'LL... UMMM... BE RIGHT BACK...
YOU ARE A PIECE OF *WORK,* LITTLE BROTHER!
YOU GOT A BUG UP YOUR ASS ABOUT TALKING TO PEOPLE OUTSIDE OF A *CONFESSIONAL BOOTH* OR WHAT?!
BACK OFF, KURT!
WHAT THE HELL AM I SUPPOSED TO *SAY* TO THEM?! THAT I KILLED THEIR DAUGHTER'S *PIMP* AND THEN GOT *HER* KILLED, TOO--?!
HEY, *WE* KILLED HER PIMP, TOUGH GUY!
THIS IS ALL...*TOO MUCH...!*
I'M LOSING MY GODDAMN *MIND...!*
THIS ISN'T ANOTHER ONE OF YOUR ODDBALL *NIGHTMARES,* Y'KNOW! THIS SHIT IS *REAL...*
AND YOU'D BETTER GET *YOUR* SHIT TOGETHER *QUICK!*
BUH-BYE, BAY-BEEEEE...!
YOU...!

NO...
...YOU'RE NOT GONNA DRIVE ME INSANE --
--BITCH!
...CAN WE GET OUTTA HERE, PEG? THIS GUY'S CLEARLY SOME KINDA RELIGIOUS SPACE CADET--
I DON'T UNDERSTAND... IT'S LIKE AUTUMN WAS DESCRIBING A TOTALLY DIFFERENT PERSON...!
WE NEVER SHOULD'VE COME HERE --
MR. AND MRS. MUELLER, I --
I TOLD YOU, FATHER, IT'S...
...CARMICHAEL...
...YOUR HAND...!
YEAH... ...LITTLE ACCIDENT IN THE MEN'S ROOM. SO, ABOUT YOUR DAUGHTER--
I THINK WE'RE GOOD, PADRE.
MOVE IT, PEG...!
APPRECIATE THE TIME YOU'VE TAKEN HERE. BUT WE'RE GONNA BE ON OUR WAY NOW...

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GOD BLESS YOU, AND ALL THAT...
...WHATEVER.
WAIT --
SHIT.
WE APOLOGIZE FOR THE *INTRUSION,* YOUR EXCELLENCY...
NOT AT ALL, DETECTIVE...
...I'M NEVER TOO BUSY TO HELP NEW YORK'S FINEST...
...I JUST HOPE THIS TURNS OUT TO BE A *FRIENDLY* VISIT.
OH, ABSOLUTELY. WE'RE JUST LOOKING FOR A LITTLE *BACKGROUND INFORMATION* ON A PERSON OF INTEREST....AND WE WEREN'T QUITE SURE WHERE TO START.
IS THERE ANYTHING YOU CAN TELL US ABOUT AN ORGANIZATION CALLED THE *SECOND CHURCH...?*

Y'SEE, EVER SINCE SAINT MATTHEW *BURNED DOWN*, WE'VE BEEN GETTING STONEWALLED BY ANYONE DIRECTLY CONNECTED TO THE CHURCH...
ARCHBISHOP WALLACE.
I'M SURE YOU'RE AWARE THAT THE SECOND CHURCH HAS BEEN MISTAKEN FOR *CATHOLIC* FOR YEARS...

INDEED I AM, AS MUCH AS IT PLAGUES ME.
BUT IT ONLY TAKES A CURSORY LOOK TO EXPOSE THE FUNDAMENTAL *DIFFERENCES* BETWEEN US.
THEIR *ONE* CHURCH TO OUR *ONE HUNDRED* IN MANHATTAN ALONE... AND YET THEY CAST A RATHER LONG AND OMINOUS *SHADOW*, DIDN'T THEY...?

IT WAS ESTABLISHED IN THE EARLY 1800'S, JUST AS *WE* WERE SETTLING HERE. INITIALLY, THEY WERE A LEGITIMATE *CONCERN*...
...UNTIL WE REALIZED THAT EXPANSION WAS *NOT* THEIR GOAL. NEVERTHELESS, THERE WAS SOME *INVESTIGATION*.

THEY *DO* FOLLOW A *RELIGIOUS TEXT*, ALTHOUGH ITS SPECIFIC ORIGINS ARE, TO DATE, UNKNOWN.
GRANTED, DIFFERENT DENOMINATIONS HOLD SACRED DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, BUT THERE ARE STILL MANY ACCEPTED *COMMONALITIES*...

...BUT *THIS* IS, AT BEST, A *CRACKED MIRROR* VERSION OF THE GOSPEL, TWISTED AND PERVERTED.
AND YOU KEEP IT... LOCKED UP IN A SAFE...?

THIS IS MERELY A *TRANSCRIPTION* OF MOST OF THE BOOKS CONTAINED WITHIN IT...
THEY CALL IT THE *BURNING BIBLE*.

OKAY...
UMMM... THIS IS FROM-- LOOKS LIKE-- THE BOOK OF *MECHEDDA*...
"MECHEDDA"...?
AHEM!
"AND UPON DAWN BREAKING, THE KING OF THE SKY TOOK GRAVA, AND SMOTE IT WITH THE EDGE OF THE SWORD...
"...AND THE PRINCE WITHIN HE UTTERLY DESTROYED, THEM, AND ALL THE TROUBLED SOULS THAT WERE THEREIN, HE LET NONE REMAIN...
"...AND TO THE OTHERS HE SAID, LET NOT YOUR ANGER SPARE, NEITHER HAVE YE PITY...
"...SLAY UTTERLY OLD AND YOUNG, BOTH MAIDS, AND LITTLE CHILDREN, AND WOMEN, TAKE MIGHTY ROOT AND FILL THE COURTS WITH THE SLAIN...
"...AND THEY WENT FORTH, AND SLEW THE CITY--
THAT'S ENOUGH.
THERE HAVE BEEN *ATTEMPTS* TO ANALYZE THE TEXT... MORE THAN ONE THEOLOGIAN HAS BEEN DRIVEN *INSANE* IN THOSE ATTEMPTS...
INTERPRETATIONS ASIDE...ARE YOU SAYING THERE'S SOMETHING SPECIFICALLY *EVIL* ABOUT THE SECOND CHURCH...?
PERHAPS.
ALTHOUGH "EVIL" HAS BECOME A *SUBJECTIVE TERM* IN OUR SOCIETY, WOULDN'T YOU AGREE...?
HAVE YOU HEARD IF THEY PLAN TO *REBUILD*...?
NO IDEA.
THEY OWN THE LAND, SO IT'S WITHIN THEIR RIGHTS...

WELL, IF YOU CHOOSE TO MOVE FORWARD IN YOUR INVESTIGATION... HAVE A CARE, DETECTIVES.
WE HAVE A SAYING HERE IN THE CHURCH...
...DON'T SHIT WHERE YOU EAT.
WE HAVE BEEN PATIENT. WE HAVE USED WISDOM. BUT THE BOOK HAS PROPHESIZED...OUR TIME HAS FINALLY COME.
CONTINUE YOUR REPORT, ACOLYTE...
ONSITE READINGS PROVED EXTREMELY FAVORABLE...
...I WOULD PROPOSE ANOTHER SCOUTING MISSION, BUT MY HUMBLE RECOMMENDATION--FROM A PURE LOGISTICS STANDPOINT--IS TO PROCEED.
IT IS OUR MANIFEST DESTINY, IS IT NOT?
INDEED IT IS.
WE ARE INVIGORATED BY THE POSSIBILITIES.
YOU SHALL RETURN TO THE NEW CITY. I SHALL ASSEMBLE THE CARDINAL COUNCIL TO ADMINISTRATE YOUR PASSAGE.
WITH PLEASURE.
I AM FOREVER YOUR SERVANT.
... REMEMBER YOUR SCRIPTURES. TEMPER YOUR EMOTIONS.
THIS IS NO LONGER ABOUT SIMPLE RETRIBUTION. THIS IS ABOUT EVOLUTION.
EVOLUTION THROUGH WAR.
SO MUCH CAN WE ACCOMPLISH AS WE ONCE AGAIN PLACE OUR BOOT PRINT UPON THE FACE OF THE WORLD.
WE WILL SMITE OUR ENEMIES WITH ONE SWIFT--
DEACON LARKIN...

THEN ALLOW ME TO QUOTE FROM THE BOOK OF BENEDIX...
..."I WILL RAIN DOWN ALL MY PLAGUES UPON THINE HEART, AND UPON THY SERVANTS, AND UPON THY PEOPLE...
..."THAT THOU MAY KNOW THERE IS NOTHING LIKE ME IN ALL THE EARTH."
SO, WE'RE GONNA TRY THIS *AGAIN,* BOYS. ANOTHER STEP ON THE PATH.
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR *HAND...?*
NOTHING.
NOTHING?!
YOU'RE SO IN *LOVE* WITH THIS HIPPIE... WHY NOT SPRAWL OUT ON THE COUCH AND CRACK OPEN YOUR SAD, LITTLE *PSYCHE* FOR HIM...?
WHAT'S THIS ABOUT...?
IT'S... *COMPLICATED,* TUBMAN. KIND OF A "WHEN IT RAINS, IT POURS"-SORTA THING...
I'VE BEEN... *SEEING* THINGS.
VISIONS. NIGHTMARES. I DON'T KNOW...
CONSIDERING MY *LIFESTYLE,* I CAN'T BE SURE WHAT'S *REAL*...AND WHAT'S *NOT.*
AND *I'M* SUPPOSED TO BE THE ONE WHO'S LOST HIS SHIT...

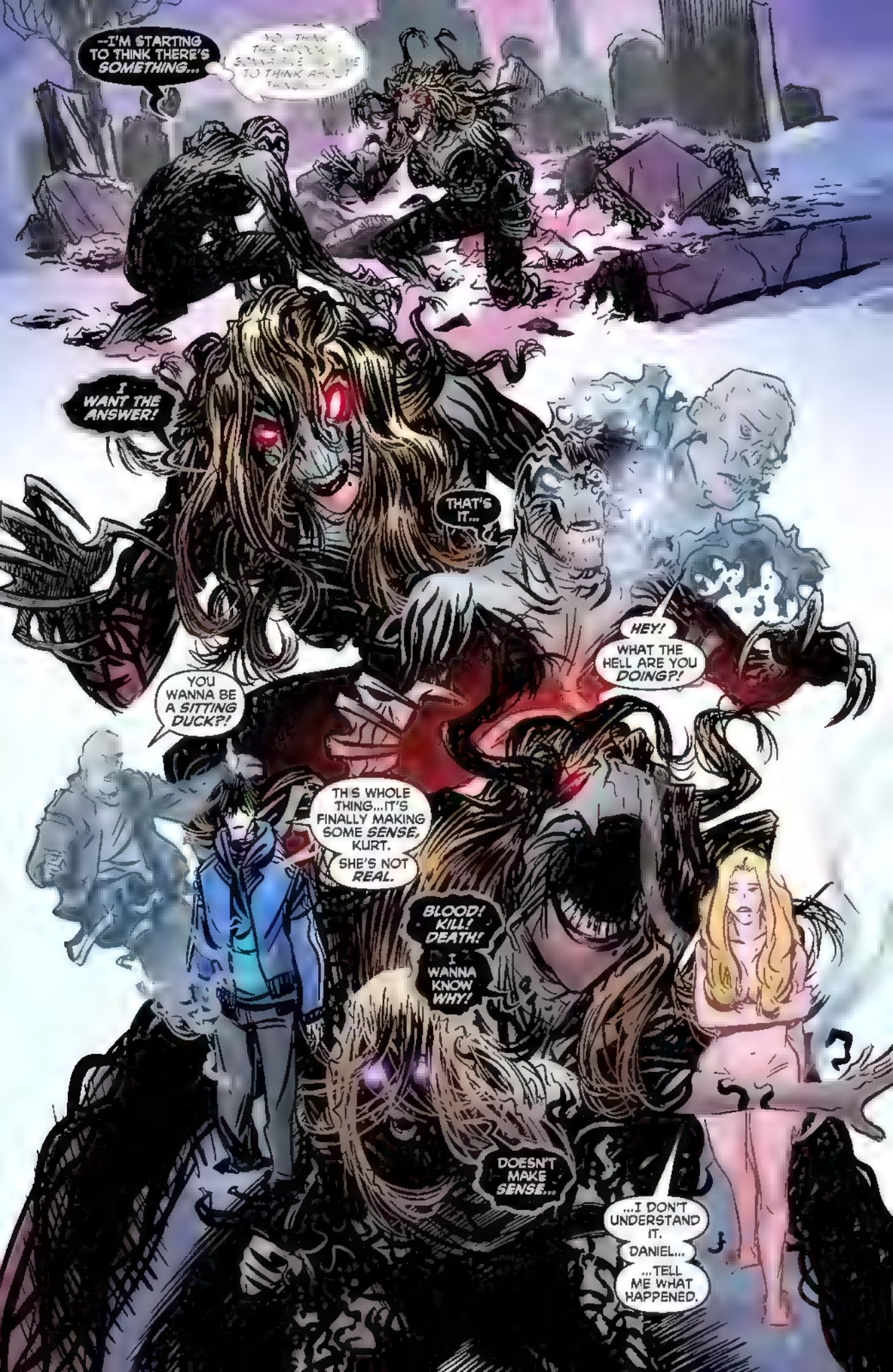
OKAY, CAN WE JUST CONCENTRATE ON THE *HERE* AND *NOW*...?!
YOU SCRUBS ARE *SO GREEN* -- *BOTH* OF YOU -- YOU HAVE NO IDEA!
SO LET'S GET INTO IT -- *USE IT OR LOSE IT!*
I REALLY WANNA *SMOKE* THIS JERK-OFF, DANNY-BOY--!
FIND ME SOMEONE *ELSE* WHO KNOWS WHAT HE'S TALKING ABOUT--
--*ESPECIALLY* WHEN IT COMES TO *YOU* AND *ME*...!
YOU HAVE *NO IDEA*, KID...
LIKE RIDIN A BIKE ..!
KEEP IT *TOGETHER*, KURT. THIS ISN'T ABOUT *YOU*--
IT'S NOT?! THEN WHAT IS IT ABOUT--?
IT'S ABOUT *CONTROL*, AND RIGHT NOW -- WE DON'T *HAVE* IT!
TRUE DAT.
YOU TWO WANNA *STAND DOWN* OR WHAT...?
DON'T WORRY, TUBMAN... I HAVE *NO INTENTION* OF LETTING HIM --
YOU *SIDESHOW FREAK* --

--LOOK AT THE DAMAGE YOU'VE DONE!
OH MY GOD...!
IT'S --
LOOKS LIKE YOU FINALLY MADE ME AS NUTS AS YOU ARE 'CAUSE I SEE IT TOO
IS THERE A PROBLEM HERE...?
--TAKE IT ALL BACK, ASSHOLE--
--AN EYE FOR AN EYE!

THIS IS A BITCH AFTER OUR OWN HEART --
TOO SOON?
AH, I SEE.
MORE GODDAMN PSYCHOSIS AT WORK...
NOT EXACTLY A DIAMOND BULLET IN THE BRAIN, IS IT...?

LOOKS LIKE SHE'S GOT A GRUDGE--!
WELL, IF YOU'RE SEEING WHAT I'M SEEING-- HOW DO WE FIGHT IT?!
TUBMAN--?
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YER ON ABOUT, SOLDIER, I'M NEVER SICK AT SEA.
WHATEVER OLD MAN
THERE'S MURDER IN THE AIR!
THIS VISION OF YOURS IS START TO PISS ME OFF, DANNY--

LUCKILY THIS AIN'T THE FIRST TIME I'VE HAD TO DEAL WITH A WOMAN SCORNED..
I'VE GOT AN ITCH I JUST CAN'T SCRATCH—!
CLASSIC MAN VERSUS- HIMSELF...
.. AND HE DOESN'T EVEN KNOW IT.
I AM SO OVER THIS...!
HOLD ON, KURT—


--I'M STARTING TO THINK THERE'S SOMETHING...
I WANT THE ANSWER!
THAT'S IT...
HEY! WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING?!
YOU WANNA BE A SITTING DUCK?!
TH S WHOLE THING...IT'S FINALLY MAKING SOME SENSE, KURT.
SHE'S NOT REAL.
BLOOD! KILL! DEATH!
I WANNA KNOW WHY!
DOESN'T MAKE SENSE...
...I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT.
DANIEL...
...TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED.

AUTUMN.
OF COURSE... YOU'RE HAUNTING ME.
YOU SEEIN' THIS, TUBMAN? IT'S DANNY'S HOOKER...
I SEE YOUR BETTER HALF TALKING TO HIMSELF...
...WHICH IS JUST ABOUT RIGHT.
YOUR DEATH... IT WAS SENSELESS. IT WAS TRAGIC.
I'VE BEEN TRYING... TO COME TO TERMS WITH IT.
BUT I CAN'T.
I AM THE COLLATERAL DAMAGE OF YOUR LIFE, DANIEL.
THE FIRST OF MANY, I'D IMAGINE...
BUT YOU'RE THE ONE THAT HAS TO LIVE WITH IT...
SO JUST KEEP LIVING...
...
THAT WAS...REALLY WEIRD.
NOW WHAT...?
WHAT KIND OF TOUCHY-FEELY QUESTION IS THAT?!
YOU NEED TO START GETTING USED TO THE FACT THAT WHAT YOU ARE...COMES WITH A HEAVY PRICE.
YOUR FRIENDS... YOUR CHURCH...THE LIFE YOU KNEW...THEY'RE ALL ON THE CHOPP NG BLOCK UNTIL YOU F GURE A FEW THINGS OUT...

AUTUMN KATHERINE MUELLER 1986–2012
...AND YOUR PSYCHOTIC BRAND OF SURVIVOR'S GUILT IS THE LEAST OF YOUR WORRIES.
AUTUMN KATHERINE MUELLER 1986–2012
NICE EULOGY. VERY MOVING.
SHUT UP, KURT.
IT'S WHAT THEY WANTED...
"WHEREVER YOU ARE"?! JEEZUS, COULD I TELL HER A THING OR TWO...!
♪ WHEN YOOOOU WISH...UPON A STAAAAAR... ♪
WE'VE DONE ALL WE COULD TO SEND YOU ON YOUR WAY...
...I JUST HOPE...WHEREVER YOU ARE, YOU'RE AT PEACE NOW.
SHOW SOME RESPECT, WOULDJA?
I DOUBT THIS GETS ME ANYTHING IN THE WAY OF PEACE OF MIND, BUT I GUESS THAT'S NOT THE POINT...
HEY, LOOK AT IT THIS WAY...
...AT LEAST YOU WON'T BE PISSIN' YOUR BED WITH MORE NIGHTMARES, RIGHT...?
YEAH, WELL...
...NOT ABOUT HER, ANYWAY.

PANT!
PANT!
PANT!
AAAHHHHH--
--OH!
YOU MAY NOT KNOW THAT YOU'RE ACTUALLY DREAMING, YOUNG LADY...

GET HAPPY!
BY JOE CASEY & NATHAN FOX
COLOR BY IVAN PLASCENCIA
...BUT, REST ASSURED, THERE'S NO NEED TO PANIC NOW.
WE'RE HERE TO SERVE AND PROTECT.
CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE!

ZONE